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NOTHING TO DO.



NOTHING TO DO:

In Accompaniment

TO

"NOTHING TO WEAR."

BY

A L A D Y.

"Look here upon this picture and on this."

With Illustrations by the Author.

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“NOTHING TO DO.”

AN ACCOMPANIMENT TO “NOTHING TO WEAR.”



MOST compassionate public, whose pity-
ing ear,
Ever ready the tale of the wretched to
hear,
Has lately been touched by those desti-
tute fair,
Who so ably have shown that they'd
“Nothing to Wear,”

6 Nothing to Do.

Be not deaf to a case, much more
wretched, I ween,

More hopeless, more sad, than you ever
have seen.

A tale I'll unfold, which shall cast in
the shade

All the sorrows of woman, wife, widow,
or maid;

'Tis a tale of strong men, not more
startling than true,

Of strong vigorous men, who have no-
thing to do.

For if ladies of fashion have nothing to
wear,

Nothing to Do. 7

'Tis a comfort that fashion herself is
quite bare.

If disconsolate widows mourn over their
dead,

There is peace in the grave, for the
low-coffined head.

And if destitute orphans have very slim
fare,

Like caméléons they seem to grow fat
upon air.

But these men, whose sad fate I'm de-
ploring to you,

Are just dying by inches, of nothing to
do;

8 Nothing to Do.

And while full of all vigor, which man-
hood can give,

Just for want of employment, are dead
while they live,

And as naked of energy, shall I confess,
As any fair belle in her evening —dress;
Just as starving in soul, and as empty
in mind,

As any young babe, whom your pity
might find.

As a type take Fitz Frivol, whose case,
it appears,

Might move e'en a Cayman to pity
and tears:

Nothing to Do. 9

Fitz Frivol, the pride and the pet of
the town;

Who quite charmed with his smile, and
quite killed with his frown;

Whose cravats were such loves, and
whose waistcoats so sweet,

And whose beavers so glossy, whose
chaussure so neat;

Who shook back his locks, when he
lifted his head,

With an air like Hyperion, yet better
bred;

Whose moustache would have made him
quite worshipped in China,

10 Nothing to Do.

No celestial on earth ever sported a
finer;

Who muttered so sweetly, and whispered
so fine,

One scarce heard what he said, but sup-
posed it divine;

Who danced just like an angel (I bor-
row the phrase

From those better versed in angelic dis-
plays).

Yet that glorious creature, that model of
man,

Is now fallen as low as humanity
can,

Nothing to Do. I I

Is ragged and haggard, and loathsome
and pale.

Despised and forgotten, ah! what shall
avail

It to him that he once led the Ger-
man at all

The most elegant fetes, or at concert or
ball,

Of all eyes was the cynosure, star and
delight,

Since his star is now set in a fathom-
less night?

And it happened in this, as in thousands
of cases,

12 Nothing to Do.

With those who depend on their waist-
coats and graces :

The most peerless moustache, which e'er
exquisite grew,

Cannot keep up a man who has nothing
to do ;

E'en immaculate shirt-fronts, with diamond
pins,

Cannot cover for ever a mountain of
sins ;

And so fell poor Fitz Frivol, so slowly,
so sure,

He who once was a love, is now voted
a bore.

Nothing to Do. 13

His father, good man, had worked early
and late,

And worn off all the hair from his poor
shining pate

With thinking and planning, and selling
and buying,

With raking and scraping, inventing and
trying,

And stock-jobbing and patents, and real
estate,

Trying every scheme, which but offered
a bait,

Till his cheeks had grown hollow, his
nose had grown blue,

14 Nothing to Do.

And all this that young Fitz might
 have nothing to do;
Nor once thought of the proverb, that
 points out the evil,
And calls it so aptly inviting the Devil.

Nor once doubted the mother, while
 cobbling and mending,
In darning and stitching her eye-sight
 expending,
Of the glorious end which it all had in
 view,

Nothing to Do. 15

That her darling and heir might have
nothing to do.

So she lived without jewels and camel-
hair shawls,

Denied herself operas, concerts, and balls,
Nor went shopping at Arnold's for rib-
bon or lace

Which might cost half as much in some
shadier place,

Nor paraded the streets as if drest for
a ball,

Through the dust and the dirt, just for
nothing at all,

Eschewing the fashion insane and unclean,

16 Nothing to Do.

Which would use rich brocade for a
sweeping machine;

Though she lived in Fifth avenue, sup-
ped in the basement,

Which need not, however, cause too much
amazement,

For the meal was quite suitable, simple,
and light,

A hybrid 'twixt dinner and supper at
night,

When the "paterfamilias" found his
way up,

Having dined down in Wall street on
cold mutton chop,

Nothing to Do. 17

From a day of hard labor, his home to
enjoy,
And dream dreams of hope for his
promising boy.

Neither parent regretted the pinching,
the care,
Poor, simple, deluded, but much loving
pair,
For the hope of the future was better
to him
Than champagne and fast horses, and
every whim

18 Nothing to Do.

Which the gay and the selfish consider
 should go

To make up the idea of Elysium below :

That hope of the future—more potent
 the charm

Than a camel-hair shawl, for it kept her
 heart warm,

A heart which for diamonds had never
 a care

For it owned but one jewel, and treasured it—there ;

To the eyes which grew heavy with
 labor or pain,

Nothing to Do. 19

That hope of the future gave bright-
ness again,
And so on through long years, till the
child grew a man,
Till the seed-time was over, and harvest
began.

And here I might aptly break off for
a while,
And say something of farming, in episode
style,
Talk of breaking up rocks, and of tear-
ing out weeds,

20 Nothing to Do.

Of enriching the soil, and of planting
the seeds;

And by means of this simile, striking
and new,

Bring my subject in stronger relief to
the view;

I might preach a long sermon, with this
for my text,

And from fifthly and sixthly, go on to
my next,

Just to show in a simple and practical
way,

How to fill up a page, with but little
to say.

Nothing to Do. 21

But such figures of rhetoric suit not my
taste ;

To acknowledge the truth, I am some-
what in haste

To bring my Fitz Frivol more plainly
to view,

As grown up and gone out, and much
sought after too.

He goes forth 'mid the glow-worms of
fashion to shine,

Amid hundreds and thousands, such
Frivols as mine ;

Nor thoughtlessly do I to glow-worms
compare

22 Nothing to Do.

The gay creatures that shine for a little
so fair,

But when shortly the brightness has
faded away,

But a very dull grub is exposed to the
day;

And but very dull grubs are the species
I mean

Who so shining and glorious nightly are
seen.



Let us follow young Fitz as he strolls
up the street:



Nothing to Do. 23

See how, gracefully bowing, the ladies
to greet,

He takes off his beaver, then with a
slight shake

Most adroitly inclines it the angle to
take

Which shall best suit his style, and then
tenderly smooths

That moustache which so great wonders
for Phalon proves,

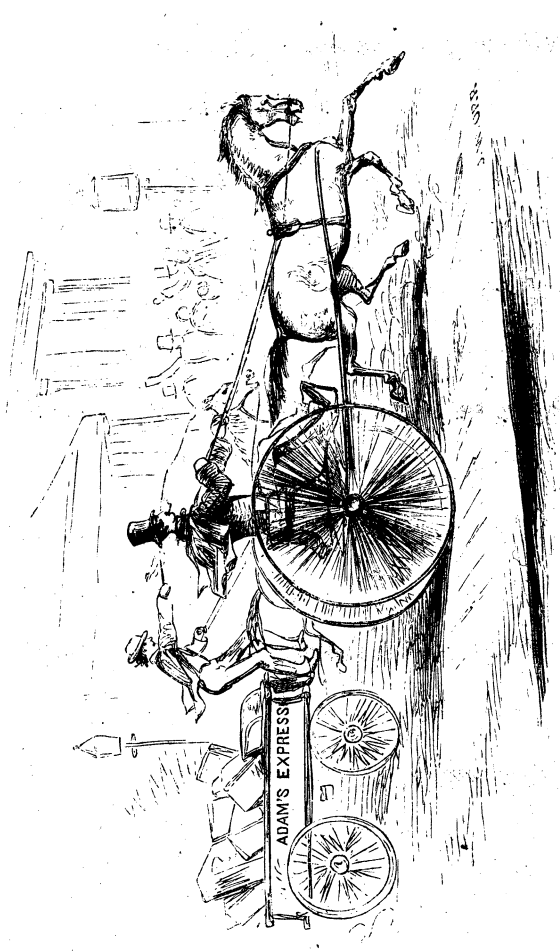
Draws his handkerchief forth with a
graceful display,

Rubs the end of his nose, and goes
smiling away;

24 Nothing to Do.

Quite at home in his part, and quite
satisfied too,
For it suits him exactly, this nothing
to do.

Meantime, while the son goes on, smiling
and nodding,
The honest papa in his wareroom is
plodding,
For the life of hard labor which made
him succeed
Is too hard for his delicate offspring to
lead.



Nothing to Do. 25

You may follow him still in his dashing career,
For his stylish turn-out is just coming
on here ;

You shall see him perform his most
daring and best

Olympian act, I mean riding abreast

With an omnibus stage and an Adams
express,

Which he gallantly beats by a length,
more or less ;

And the most crowded streets, I have
noticed, always

Seem approved of the most for these
chariot displays.

26 Nothing to Do.

To the billiard saloon you shall follow
him too,

Where he shows no small aptness in
minding his cue;

He will even give fifty, and yet win
his match,

Unless you should gain by some fortunate scratch.

With honor and ease, to the bar he's
admitted,

And doubtless with glory himself has
acquitted

Nothing to Do. 27

In cases of cobblers, and juleps, and
smashes,

And even at "stone fences" gallantly
dashes.

He can show country cousins to dozens
of places,

Where the men spend as much as the
women for laces.

You shall see him while smoking, while
betting, while playing

At all sorts of games; for indeed there's
no saying

What numbers of elegant ways he has
learned

28 Nothing to Do.

To make way with the money his poor
father earned.

He may even have learned those accom-
plishments fitting

The elegant man, id est, chewing and
spitting.

All this and much more you shall see
if you go

Where they congregate most, who their
glories would show.



Thus the morning review is successfully
made ;

Nothing to Do. 29

You shall see him again at the evening
parade,
Still more brilliant than ever, with jewel
and chain
Fully armed for the conquest, nor striving
in vain.

Like a planet whose satellites follow him
round,
Lo! wherever he turns, a fair audience
is found,

30 Nothing to Do.

To admire his sallies and laugh at his
jest,

Though I own it is seldom correctly
expressed ;

But all styles have admirers, so I've
heard say,

And those whom Fitz Frivol admires
are they

Who spend all their lives dressing, yet
ever declare,

As we lately have heard, that they've
nothing to wear !

And the cause of this dressing I'll
whisper to you—

Nothing to Do. 31

'Tis to suit the young men who have
nothing to do.

'Tis a fact undisputed, from Peking to
Cadiz,

That the taste of the men is the guide
for the ladies;

The Flora M'Flimseys, beflounced and
belaced,

Are just suited to many a masculine
taste—

A taste on philosophy founded, no
doubt—

What is wanting within, should be made
up without ;

32 Nothing to Do.

And the idols of fashion would shortly
 expire,

If the male devotees would but cease
 to admire ;

And I ask those who reason from na-
 tural laws,

Which should first be removed, the
 effect or the cause ?



But I said that the ladies admired my
 hero,



Nothing to Do. 33

(There are ladies who'd even admire a
Nero,)

For they chattered to him, without dan-
ger or fear

Of the pointed rebuke or the cynical
sneer.

'Tis a saving of trouble, and thinking,
and bother,

When people's capacities just suit each
other;

No fear of one's sallies passed by or
rejected,

Or the other's grammatical errors de-
tected.

34 Nothing to Do.

So Fitz Frivol is honored, and feted, and
courted,

As becomes a young man who's a
Cræsus reported;

Is invited by all the great Newcomes
up town,

Is pronounced most genteel, and en-
dorsed too by Brown—

The same who transformed the Fifth
Avenue dwelling

From its quiet routine (spite the elders
rebellng)

To a palace of splendor, and straight-
way gave out

Nothing to Do. 35

Full five hundred invites to an elegant
rout;

Where played the champagne e'en a little
too free,

And some very nice men played the
fiddle de-dee.

After supper (the ladies had quitted the
throng),

Young Fitz, glass in hand, gave the fol-
lowing song:

Quaff from the cup of pleasure,

Ask not who distils it;

36 Nothing to Do.

Drink from the sparkling measure,
And never ask who fills it.

The honey bee asks not,
While o'er the flower enchanted
He revels in his happy lot,
By whom the flower was planted.

Then fill a bumper quick,
Drink to the careful father
Who plants the nut for us to crack.
The plum for us to gather.



Nothing to Do. 37

But when the poor mother of Fitz Frivol beheld

All the morrow's confusion, her spirit was
quelled;

She began to perceive that the son of
her love

Now belonged to a sphere where she
never could move,

And would soon be entirely lost to her
view

'Mid the crowd of gay folks who have
nothing to do.

So 'tis said that she folded her work up
and sighed;

38 Nothing to Do.

And, her life's labor ended, she lay down
and died.

So it has been and will be with many
another—

All her life for a dream and a shadow
—poor mother!

But the father! and did he not glory
and joy

In the fashion and fame of his dearly-
loved boy

Nothing to Do. 39

Yes, of course; but he saw him so seldom of late,

'Twas so tedious at night for his coming to wait:

And 'twas ever a problem he could not resolve,

Which again and again through his mind would revolve,

That the son for whom leisure and pleasure to gain

He had given a lifetime of labor and pain;

Who had time to attend to each fashion and whim,

40 Nothing to Do.

Had not even an hour, a moment for
him.

When they met in the street, he was
smiling and gay,

But engagements led each quite a differ-
ent way:

The elder continued his journey down
town,

While the younger went up to take
counsel of Brown.

So the father just did as the wise insects
do,

Nothing to Do. 41

Who provide for their offspring with
instinct so true;

And having attained the main object of
life,

Said good night to the world, and lay
down with his wife.



Fitz Frivol was now at the zenith of
glory;

O who has not heard of the fame of
his story!

42 Nothing to Do.

The knight still most favored he carried
the day,

For his fortune had not yet quite
melted away.

And he sported with hearts in a manner
most cruel,

For many a mother's particular jewel
Had been his for the asking ; but
rather chose he

To disport in his sunshine, the gay fickle
bee ;

To enjoy the sensation his coming produced,
And the flutter of joy which his presence
infused.

Nothing to Do. 43

When he went to a concert, no Thal-
berg was heard

By the ladies who greatly to Thalberg
preferred

A flirtation with him, and kept up such
a noise,

Less suited to ladies than to rowdy school-
boys.

At the opera, too, they kept up such
a chatter,

Such laughing, and whispering, and vex-
atious clatter,—

Not even in church could these damsels
be still,

44 Nothing to Do.

For at fashion's own fane they conducted
so ill

As to gain for themselves the distin-
guished renown

Of a little bit faster than any in town.

Though he had not the comfort of
feminine cousins,

He had fair correspondents and letters
by dozens ;

And he showed them of course, for
what pleasure or credit

In a lady's love-letter if nobody read it!

And he met these fair friends just by
chance it would seem,



Nothing to Do. 45

When he dropped in at Taylor's to take
an ice-cream.

And they laughed all the time at the
present, the past:

'Twas an excellent joke from the first to
the last.

The wit was obscure, I acknowledge
'tis true,

People laugh at small jokes who have
nothing to do.

But I haste by the end of my story to
prove

The case which I hoped your com-
passion should move.

46 Nothing to Do.

The picture reversed, in the space of
six years

His large fortune is spent, and Fitz
Frivol appears

Like the elegant purse when deprived of
its filling,

In fact, like the gingerbread minus the
gilding ;

And now 'tis in vain that to Newport
he goes,

And frequents all the regular markets
and shows,

Where people exhibit the animal hu-
man,



Nothing to Do. 47

The patent-leather man, and the crinoline
woman.

More gaily than ever the pave he walks,
More softly than ever his nothings he
talks :

But in vain—for the fact of it is, there
are few

Who admire poor men who have nothing
to do.

Thus his chances are small, since he's not
a French count,

Or a baron from Germany, where the
amount

Of distinction and title would set at defiance

48 Nothing to Do.

All objection to such an unsuited alliance
Not even a foreign musician is he,
Whose bad English would seem an
 attraction to be.

Yet, if that be the charm, there is no
 need to roam,

One may hear very singular English at
 home.

He is none of these charmers—his pass-
 port is gone ;

He falls back on his merits, and, lo,
 they are flown !

So he straightway goes down to the
 depths of despair,

Nothing to Do. 49

Neglects his moustache, and turns false
to his hair ;
And descends by degrees, as I told you
before,
From the leader of ton to the veriest
bore
Who ever held up an example to view
Of the fate of a trifler with nothing to
do.

You will think that, perhaps, as a national
failing,

50 Nothing to Do.

This case is uncommon, and say I am
railing

On very small grounds; but the evil is
growing,

Out of luxury, pride, and frivolity flowing;
And this generation despises the pains
By which the preceding its affluence
gains.

Many fathers are laboring, 'twould seem,
with the view

That their sons may live easy, with
nothing to do.

And many there are, having spent all
their store,

Nothing to Do. 51

And no sort of resource to supply them
with more ;

Inefficient and indolent, having no taste
For aught but extravagance, luxury,
waste ;

Are fit subjects for charity's self to bewail,
A sad moral to point or illustrate a tale.
Of such can society point out a host,
And 'tis these, I declare, you should pity
the most.

Does so little work offer, O, can it be
true !

That these destitute men can find
nothing to do !

52 Nothing to Do.

In the vineyard stand idle, encumber the
ground,

Or like poisonous parasites clinging
around

The firm stem that supports them, but
having no strength

To continue when that is exhausted at
length.



Is there nothing to study and nothing
to learn,

No object to care for, no credit to earn;

Nothing to Do. 53

No wisdom worth seeking, no aim to
fulfil,

No hope to encourage, no motive for
will;

No field unexplored, no pathway to
aught

That is worthy a being of reason and
thought?

Can it be there is nothing an int'rest
possessing

More worth than society, dashing, and
dressing!!!

54 Nothing to Do.

O, you charity folks! who give balls for
the poor,

And sing songs for the wretched, O
have you no more

Pleasant ways of exciting benevolent
feeling,

To the hearts or the heels of the fashion
appealing?

You industrial people, who get up the
places

Where labor brings joy to so many small
faces,

O have you no sympathy, have you
no plan,



Nothing to Do. 55

To provide for the helpless, the indolent
man ?

Ah, could but the Genii with magical
wand

Transform as of old, and by mighty
command

Make the soft sons of luxury take up
the hoe,

The shovel, the pick-axe, and change with
the low,

Over-tasked sons of labor, who struggle
and toil

56 Nothing to Do.

Where the winter winds freeze and the
summer suns broil !

—(There many true spirits misplaced you
will find,

Where penury's fetters keep slavish the
mind ;

Opportunity lacking to burst from the
chain

Which binds them to ignorance, longing
in vain

For the fountains of knowledge which
others refuse ;

For the least of the chances which others
abuse.)—

Nothing to Do. 57

Then the dull and the slothful and
grovelling alone

Would be drawers of water and hewers
of stone ;

Then a cure would be found for this
fast spreading evil,

And the test of the mind would bring
all to their level ;

Then would men be adjudged by an
estimate true,

And the triflers of fashion—find something
to do.

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